



U.S. Department of Justice

CHANNING D. PHILLIPS
*Acting United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, September 10, 2009

For Information Contact Public Affairs

Benjamin Friedman (202) 514-6921

www.usdoj.gov/usao/dc/press/pressrel.html

Four men plead guilty to killing man in Northeast Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. - Acting U.S. Attorney Channing D. Phillips announced that between January 26, 2009 and September 1, 2009, four men pled guilty for their roles in the killing of Lovell "Little Dep" Harrison. Gary Durant, 18, Koran Marshall, 20, Ronald Watson, 26, and Jamar Tatum, 20, of Washington, D.C., all pled guilty to Voluntary Manslaughter before the Honorable Frederick H. Weisberg, of the D.C. Superior Court. The guilty pleas were staggered over a period of months because the original case was severed into four separate trials due to evidentiary issues. Marshall, Watson and Durant have already been sentenced, with Marshall and Watson each receiving 10 year terms of incarceration, and Durant receiving a 7-year term of incarceration. Tatum's sentencing is scheduled for October 30, 2009.

According to evidence introduced at the defendants' plea hearings, this killing was part of a complex series of crimes that occurred in the area of 21st Street and Maryland Avenue in Northeast Washington, D.C. From 2006 to 2008, a series of shootings and murders in this area intensified. During this period, two rival factions from this neighborhood were in conflict with one another. One group, centered in the Langston Terrace neighborhood, was "at war" with the second group, from the area of 21st Street and Maryland Avenue, NE. On January 6, 2007, the four defendants, who were from the Langston Terrace faction, planned to meet members of their rival group in an attempt to "quash," or resolve, their disagreements. However, the four defendants and others in their group came to believe that their rivals were planning an ambush, so they decided to attack first. Tatum, Marshall, Durant, Watson, and several others made preparations for the assault by donning masks and arming themselves with guns.

The defendants went to the 1100 block of 21st Street and took up positions on either side of a building. When someone in the area shot a gun, all four defendants opened fire. A running gun battle ensued. Lovell Harrison, a member of the 21st and Maryland group, was struck by a bullet during the extended melee.

Harrison was transported to Howard University Hospital, where lifesaving procedures failed, and he was pronounced dead. An autopsy was performed by the D.C. Medical Examiner's Office, which determined that the cause of Lovell Harrison's death was a gun shot wound and that the manner of death was homicide.

The Metropolitan Police Department collected evidence from the crime scene, mainly spent bullets and casings. They painstakingly analyzed these casings and bullets and linked them to various shootings and murders in the area. As a result of this evidentiary analysis, the defendants became suspects. When the defendants were arrested for other unrelated crimes, including gun possession, they were interviewed at length by seasoned MPD detectives and investigators. Ultimately, all four defendants made detailed video statements explaining their role in the shooting melee that led to Lovell Harrison's death.

In announcing the convictions, Acting U.S. Attorney Phillips praised the work of MPD Detectives Dwayne Corbett, Darren March and Sgt. John Hayes, as well as Officers Michael Derian, and firearm analyst Michael Mulderig. He also thanked Paralegal Ethel Gregory, of the U.S. Attorney's Office, and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Samuel Ramer, who prosecuted the case, and Jean Sexton, who investigated and indicted the case.

###